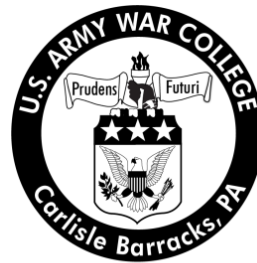


Risk and Reward of an Operational Marine Corps Reserve

by

Lieutenant Colonel Curtis A. Mason
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United States Army War College
Class of 2012

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.					
1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 21-03-2012		2. REPORT TYPE Strategy Research Project		3. DATES COVERED (From - To)	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Risk and Reward of an Operational Marine Corps Reserve				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) Lieutenant Colonel Curtis A. Mason				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Colonel Alan L. Orr II Department of Military Strategy, Planning, and Operations				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army War College 122 Forbes Avenue Carlisle, PA 17013				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Distribution: Approved for public release distribution is unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT Send in the Marines. For over two hundred and thirty-five years America's strategic leaders have called upon the Nation's expeditionary force-in-readiness to protect and defend our interests whether home or abroad. The Corps is an air, ground, and logistics total force enterprise that provides the United States a capability rivaled by no other organization in the world. The Marine Corps' total force structure is comprised of an active component (AC) and a reserve component (RC). Over the past decade, the RC of the Marine Corps has been employed as an operational reserve although it is primarily organized, trained and equipped as a strategic reserve. As the Global War on Terror progresses, strategic leaders within the RC and AC must conduct an analysis of the Marine Corps' total force framework to address RC gaps in doctrine, organization, leadership and education. The analysis will further enable the RC to become an effective and efficient contributor to the middleweight of America's Armed Services; light enough to get to the fight quickly and heavy enough to carry the day upon arrival. This SRP will discuss the Marine Corps RC posture through a wide angle lens and briefly address a few of the risks and rewards of the strategic structure transitioning to an operational asset.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Operational Reserve, Strategic Reserve, Reserve Component					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UNLIMITED	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 30	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT UNCLASSIFIED	b. ABSTRACT UNCLASSIFIED	c. THIS PAGE UNCLASSIFIED			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (include area code)

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Lieutenant Colonel Curtis A. Mason
TITLE: Risk and Reward of an Operational Marine Corps Reserve
FORMAT: Strategy Research Project
DATE: 21 March 2012 WORD COUNT: 6322 PAGES: 30
KEY TERMS: Operational Reserve, Strategic Reserve, Reserve Component
CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

Send in the Marines. For over two hundred and thirty-five years America's strategic leaders have called upon the Nation's expeditionary force-in-readiness to protect and defend our interests whether home or abroad. The Corps is an air, ground, and logistics total force enterprise that provides the United States a capability rivaled by no other organization in the world. The Marine Corps' total force structure is comprised of an active component (AC) and a reserve component (RC). Over the past decade, the RC of the Marine Corps has been employed as an operational reserve although it is primarily organized, trained and equipped as a strategic reserve. As the Global War on Terror progresses, strategic leaders within the RC and AC must conduct an analysis of the Marine Corps' total force framework to address RC gaps in doctrine, organization, leadership and education. The analysis will further enable the RC to become an effective and efficient contributor to the middleweight of America's Armed Services; light enough to get to the fight quickly and heavy enough to carry the day upon arrival. This SRP will discuss the Marine Corps RC posture through a wide angle lens and briefly address a few of the risks and rewards of the strategic structure transitioning to an operational asset.

RISK AND REWARD OF AN OPERATIONAL MARINE CORPS RESERVE

To remain the Nation's force in readiness, the Marine Corps must continuously innovate.¹

—Marine Corps Vision and Strategy 2025

The active and reserve components of the Marine Corps have grown accustomed to working alongside each other over the past ten years. Reserve component (RC) Marines augmented the operating forces throughout the global war on terrorism (GWOT) and created a symbiotic relationship that is the backbone of the total force. The "War on Terrorism," named by the G.W. Bush administration, focused attention on the military element of national power and dismissed the other elements.² The other contributing efforts such as federal, state and local law enforcement agencies protecting the homeland; the international banking community assisting in tracking the monetary flow of terrorist organizations; and informing our Muslim allies of the false claims against democracy, were overlooked within the "War on Terrorism" moniker. There is a transition of the United States' strategic leaders disassociating the "War on Terrorism" as an actual war that aligns along a symmetric battlefield where large formations of opposing armor and personnel faced each other in a linear and somewhat organized fashion.³ I believe this is due to our senior leaders and governmental officials revised strategic view on terrorism as a global struggle against the enemies of freedom and civilization. Conflict in the 21st century will be never-ending and accented with an enemy who has random objectives and an asymmetric order of battle.⁴

This seemingly endless struggle is a recursive problem that the Marine Corps has battled on and off over the past 235 years of its existence. The recently published operational employment concept, *The Long War: Send in the Marines*, addresses the

future use of the Marine Corps as Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) reach termination criteria for a military end state.⁵ The reserve component's participation within global contingencies over the past ten years has been a force multiplier for the Marine Corps total force construct.⁶ Participation on behalf of the reserve component in these contingencies made the Corps' strategic reserve, operational.

A strategic reserve's role is to augment and reinforce the active component during a major contingency. Members of this reserve force are mobilized for short duration in order to assist in a national crisis. This policy is essentially a break glass endeavor that provides additional personnel to the active component in times of war. At the conclusion of the national crisis the strategic reserve is demobilized and put back on the shelf in preparation for another event. The shelf time for the strategic reserve includes large periods on non-use.

The reserve component of the Marine Corps is a strategic reserve and has conducted sustained operations throughout the GWOT. The current reserve component is not structured for operations within a protracted engagement. World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and Operations Desert Shield / Storm are the types of contingencies that come to mind when the requirement of a strategic reserve is called upon. The operational reserve concept is currently written into the Department of Defense (DOD) policy Directive 1200.17, "Managing the Reserve Components as an Operational Force."⁷ The policy was further magnified within the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) Report, which emphasized the importance of a reserve component having the knowledge, skills, and abilities to serve in an operational capacity

with available trained and equipped units for predictable and routine deployments.⁸ As costs are realized by the Armed Services in light of the looming budget cuts, a comprehensive role for the reserve component will have to be carved out in order to provide the needed structure for the total force. The Marine Corps of the 21st century will rely on the total force to address and deter future conflict that is global and seemingly exponential.⁹ The QDR further states that elements of the reserve component are essential to the Nation's national strategy in preventing and deterring future conflict.

The events of 9/11 have shown to be a forcing function in making the Marine Corps' sixty year old and antiquated strategic reserve system obsolete. The Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Amos', March 1, 2011 report to the House Armed Services Committee on the posture of the United States Marine Corps specifically addressed the Marine Corps Reserve's operational orientation and contribution to that construct:

The transition in utilization of the Marine Corps Reserve from a strategic to operational reserve, as affirmed by the Marine Corps' recent force structure review, expands the Corps' ability to perform as America's Expeditionary Force in Readiness.¹⁰

The Commandant of the Marine Corps has stated that the Marine Corps' reserve component has transitioned to an operational reserve. The requirement to have an operational reserve entails an establishment of specific equipping, manning, and training levels in concert with associated budget increases. For the most part, the Marine Corps is leading the other service components in this realm however, the lead is attributed to economies of scale and not part of any deliberate effort to transition the

reserve component to an operational role.¹¹ The active component of the Marine Corps is using the following guidance from the Secretary of Defense:

- “. . . to be at the “tip of the spear” in the future, when the U.S. military is likely to confront a range of irregular and hybrid conflicts.”
- “. . . the United States will continue to face a diverse range of threats that will require a more flexible portfolio of military capabilities.”
- “. . . flexible and prepared to fight and operate in any contingency – including counterinsurgency and stability operations.”
- “. . . the maritime soul of the Marine Corps needs to be preserved.”
- “. . . challenge is finding the right balance between preserving what is unique and valuable while making changes needed to win the wars we are in and likely to face.”
- “. . . the Marines’ greatest strengths: a broad portfolio of capabilities and penchant for adapting that are needed to be successful in any campaign.”¹²

As the Marine Corps moves forward in implementing its Force Structure Review, the above guidance weighed substantially in reducing the active component end strength from 202,000 to 186,000.¹³ The reserve component will remain at 39,600.¹⁴ There are some drastic changes in the AC of the Marine Corps as a result of implementing the guidance of the Secretary of Defense; embracing the past and present customs, courtesies and traditions, while not hollowing out the organization to a point where readiness is lip service and not combat reality. To be clear, detachments through regimental headquarters will have their colors cased as the active component of the Marine Corps looks to transform into an efficient 21st Century middleweight force that is optimized for rapid crisis response while maintaining strategic mobility for a lethal application of combat power.¹⁵

As the Secretary of the Navy further refined the role of the Marine Corps, the role of an operational reserve is firmly nested within the efforts of the active component to become a 21st century fighting force. The Guidance from the Secretary of the Navy is as follows:

- “. . . build on Marine Corp’s willingness to adapt and its steady institutional focus on readiness and national relevance.”
- “. . . conduct a capabilities-based force structure review that balances requirements and capacities throughout the conflict spectrum, across multiple domains (sea, air, ground, and cyber).”
- “. . . provide me with recommendations that result in a 21st century expeditionary force in readiness.”
- “. . . remain capable of being able to project ready-to-fight forces from the sea into potentially hostile territory.”
- “. . . must remain a well-trained, morally strong, highly disciplined, high-state-of-readiness force, capable of operating persistently forward in multiple geographic theaters; responding rapidly to any crisis.”
- “. . . primary goal should be to maximize total force capability and minimize risk.”
- “. . . rapidly disaggregate and aggregate to increase forward engagement, rapidly respond to crisis, and rapidly project power in austere locations.”
- “. . . provide options for headquarters and staff reductions and institutional efficiencies.”¹⁶

The reserve component of the Marine Corps is an artifact of the cold war and potentially resistant to change. The greatest obstacle to change within an institution as storied as the Marine Corps will be institutional and will take a total force effort to develop a viable operational reserve that is interchangeable with the active component and integrated into a seamless fighting organization and not a doctrinal panacea.¹⁷

Doctrine: The Way We Fight

The current reserve component is based on principles and planning considerations established in the Armed Forces Reserve Act of 1952 and the Total Force Policy issued by the Secretary of Defense in 1970. The current Commandant of the Marine Corps, in the below planning guidance, stated the Marine Corps responds to today's crisis with today's forces, today:

The Marine Corps is America's Expeditionary Force in Readiness - a balanced air-ground-logistics team. We are forward-deployed and forward-engaged: shaping, training, deterring, and responding to all manner of crises and contingencies. We create options and decision space for our Nation's leaders. Alert and ready, we respond to today's crisis, with today's force . . . TODAY. Responsive and scalable, we team with other services, allies and interagency partners. We enable and participate in joint and combined operations of any magnitude. A middleweight force, we are light enough to get there quickly, but heavy enough to carry the day upon arrival, and capable of operating independent of local infrastructure. We operate throughout the spectrum of threats - irregular, hybrid, conventional - or the shady areas where they overlap. Marines are ready to respond whenever the Nation calls . . . wherever the President may direct.¹⁸

The AC has made strides to ensure that the guidance of the Commandant of the Marine Corps, the Secretary of Defense, and Secretary of the Navy was followed and effectively carried out.¹⁹ In 1995, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, then General Krulak, stated the following in his guidance for the Marine Corps: " . . . there is only one Marine Corps - a Total Force Marine Corps. The days of two Marine Corps are gone . . . forever. Our active and reserve components will be broadly and seamlessly integrated, and indivisible as a balanced warfighting force. The full acceptance of this reality is critical to our future."²⁰ As 2012 falls upon the Marine Corps, the reserve component could be seen as fighting today's crisis with yesterday's forces, today. Over a decade has passed since General Krulak gave guidance to the

AC and RC of the Marine Corps and the reserve component has not restructured its cold war strategic reserve posture.

The past 10 years of war generated an operational niche of reserve Marines. These Marines deployed in non-traditional roles as individual augments to fill billets on Marine Air Ground Task Forces, joint staffs, and numerous mentor training teams in support of OEF and OIF. The traditional use of reserve component units has a one to four utilization rate: that is one year of activation for every four years of training in order to prepare for another activation. The four year training period incorporates a yearly two week annual training event and a one weekend per month drilling event. That is the standard training requirement allotted for a strategic reserve.

The inherent risk within the reserve component training methodology is twofold. The minimal preparation time for an operational commitment either in combat or theater security cooperation limits the value that a unit or individual can contribute. In order to mitigate operational risk in the training the reserve component unit receives, the gaining force command will disaggregate the reserve component unit into sections, platoons, and companies and distribute amongst the active component forces.²¹ The distributed reserve component units will be attached to Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) headquarters units, Regimental Combat Teams, and active component Infantry Battalions. Reserve component battalion headquarters are rendered ineffective and the workup training that the unit spent at the intermediate location (ILOC) operating as a cohesive unit is wasted time, effort, and resources.

The second risk within the reserve component training doctrine is the opposite of not enough training. Reserve component Marines joined the reserves because they

realized it was not a full time requirement. Family life and civilian employment are the competing events of a citizen soldier. The extended training will take the reserve component Marine out of the standard training cycle and require a time commitment that may not be able to be met. Employers have supported reserve component Marines over the past 10 years through holding their jobs until the deployment ends and in a few cases augmenting their pay to support the hardship as many reserve Marines may receive less than what their civilian pay is. A delicate balance has to be sought between training and unit readiness. An overabundance of required training runs the risk of alienating the very Marines who provide the manning for the operational reserve. As the operational Marine Corps reserve is further developed, consideration for training risk whether not enough or too much is a significant consideration for employment. This consideration for a more robust use of the Marine Corps reserve component will have to result in new legislation that ultimately protects the reserve component Marine's civilian employment while enabling participation in a well-trained operational reserve unit.

The active and reserve components have made great strides since General Krulak issued his guidance for the Marine Corps to become an integrated force. At the time of General Krulak's guidance, the Marine Corps was in the midst of reducing its size from 199,000 to 172,000 (see Figure 2). That represents more than a 13% reduction in the active component end strength. During the period in which the Marine Corps reduced in size, officers that did not get augmented into the active component found a home in the reserve component. To get augmented during this period was extremely competitive. Many of the Captains and Lieutenants, who failed to augment in the active component then, are now General Officers and Colonels in the reserve

component. These strategic leaders of the reserve component are now called upon to retool the Marine Corps strategic reserve into an operational reserve. This is another risk the reserve component faces in retooling its current strategic structure due to the unfamiliarity of its strategic leaders with an operational concept.

Organization: How We Organize to Fight

The report of the Marine Corps' 2010 Force Structure Review group has one specified task for the reserve component in increasing operational efficiency: place the reserve division, wing and logistics group headquarters in cadre status and eliminating the Mobilization Command headquarters by assimilating associated functions into Marine Forces Reserve (MFR) headquarters.²² As the reserve component strategic leaders work to operationalize the reserve component, careful consideration is required to ensure that undue risk is not created in the newly formed structure. Without developing a clearly defined direction the burgeoning reserve component strategic structure will not be able to meet the requirements of an operational reserve. The active component conducts a similar process within the tenants of the Joint Operational Planning Process (JOPP). The JOPP incorporates art and design while developing strategic guidance and objectives for the purpose of an enduring strategic concept for the sustained employment of military power in the accomplishment of national policy.²³ In this case, the planning process to operationalize the reserve component will account for the guidance of the Secretary of Defense, Secretary of the Navy, and the Commandant of the Marine Corps. This should be done in order to develop a sustained organizational structure for the reserve component of the Marine Corps that is efficient, relevant, and operational.

Operational design has recursive components that require continuous assessment to codify the existing problem and determination of actions addressing that problem.²⁴ At the onset in building operational design you must first frame the environment and define the problem. Putting the environment in an appropriate context and properly defining the problem is essential to solving the problem.²⁵ As we look to the problem that the Marine Corps may have concerning operationalizing the reserve component, a synthesis has to be conducted on the guidance given by General Krulak in 1995, one Marine Corps. Are the Marines and units that comprise the RC and AC interchangeable in order to be plugged into a scalable MAGTF that is conducting security cooperation, or combat operations? Can Staff Non-Commissioned Officers and Senior Officers within the RC augment the five designated Joint Task Force (JTF) capable regionally aligned Marine Expeditionary Brigades (MEB) as directed in the Force Structure Review group?²⁶ The risks that the reserve component faces in the above questions are similar to the previously listed training risks. There is a delicate balance that has to be reached in creating a reserve component Marine that is interchangeable in the active component at the individual and unit level. The time commitment required to train an operational reserve may be more than the individual Marines within the reserve component are willing and able to provide.

Leadership and Education: How We Prepare our Leaders to Lead the Fight

General George C. Marshall is reported to have stated the below after becoming the Chief of Staff of the Army shortly before World War II:

It became clear to me that at the age of 58 I would have to learn new tricks that were not taught in the military manuals or on the battlefield. In this position I am a political soldier and will have to put my training in rapping-out orders and making snap decisions on the back burner, and

have to learn the arts of persuasion and guile. I must become an expert in a whole new set of skills.²⁷

The new set of skills that General Marshall and any leader operating at the strategic level have to obtain in order to facilitate success as a political soldier or strategic leader are grounded in vision, communication, and climate. Senior officers within the reserve component of the Marine Corps are strategic leaders and there is an exhaustive list of knowledge, skills, and abilities that they must possess in order to take the reserve component into the 21st century. The Department of the Army Field Manual (FM) 22-100, *Military Leadership*, dated August 1999 provides a listing of twenty-one competencies that are required of a strategic leader.²⁸ Although each competency listed is vital, three of them stand out as core concepts that form the basis of strategic leadership; envisioning, communicating, and building. For the purposes of this analysis of the RC and preparing our senior leaders, I have categorized these three core competencies into vision, communication and climate. Vision, communication, and climate are the most important core competencies that senior leaders within the Marine Corps RC must master in order to make decisions and effectively align the organization of MFR within a constantly changing environment. This changing environment is one that takes the RC to an operational realm.

Strategic leadership in the 21st century will be in an environment that is volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA).²⁹ There are three competencies within FM 22-100 that define leaders whether tactical, operational, or strategic, in terms of 'Be, Know, and Do.' By all accounts the strategic leader has to "Be, Know, and Do" everything.³⁰ Being is about knowing yourself, how you display your values and attributes, and the example you set. Knowing involves the skills required to be a leader,

such as technical and tactical competency, while doing is about influencing, operating, and improving.³¹ These are simple definitions, but it is important to note that effective leaders at any level must be proficient at 'Be, Know, and Do' in order to be successful. A leader must subsume what I believe to be the three core concepts of vision, communication and climate from the trilogy in order to transcend the tactical and operational realm of decision making and execute at the strategic. This concept has to be injected into the Marine Forces Reserve organizational hierarchy.

While it is presumed that each officer within the RC attended The Basic School (TBS), the requirement for specified Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) training goes without saying. As a total force, the AC and RC should have the same educational and MOS training requirements throughout. The senior officers within the active component attend TBS, MOS school, career level school, intermediate level school, and top level school. Each school progression is commensurate with the Marine's competence level and provides the active component an indication of the contribution that the Marine can make to the total force.

The reserve component has a divergent path with regards to ensuring the education of the officers within the organization. There is no requirement to attend any formal training or education beyond MOS school. Within the active component, progression through rank and responsibility goes in line with your training and formalized professional military education (PME). This education gives an officer the needed tools to provide vision, effectively communicate, and enable the right climate as a leader of an organization, whether tactical, operational, or strategic. In many cases the reserve component has optional education milestones for its officers. Although the

opportunity to attend PME exists, whether through distance education or resident training, many of the officers have not completed formalized PME and in many cases attempt to lead at the operational and strategic level with a tactical PME foundation and leadership skillset. This is a risk for the total force as the Marine Corps refines its end strength for the AC and the RC begins to assume a more pronounced operational role.

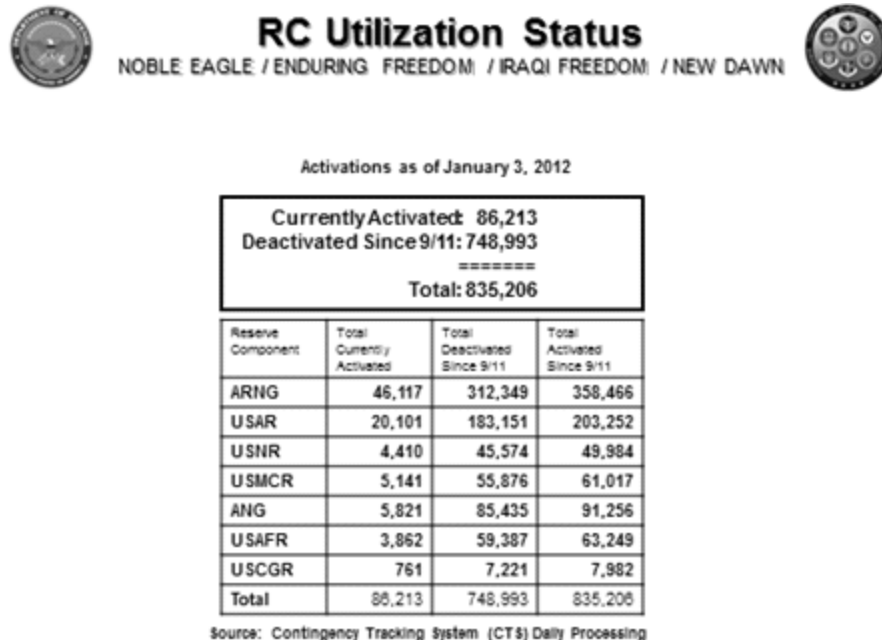


Figure 1. Reserve Component Utilization Status

During the past 10 years there have been many reserve component Marines that have actively participated in the global struggle against the enemies of freedom and civilization (see Figure 1). Throughout that time, those same reserve component Marines have been promoted and presumably assumed billets of greater responsibility. Another risk of an operational reserve is centered on the reserve component senior leaders that spent their formidable years in the Marine Corps cold war strategic reserve. Freeze-dried is a term that comes up frequently when an active component officer

describes a reserve component officer that has the rank of a strategic leader and the leadership capacity of a tactical officer. This phenomena occurs when an officer completes only TBS and MOS training yet he continues to get promoted and in some cases becomes a senior leader within the reserve component. The risk is inherent in General Marshall's statement where he knows that he has to learn a new set of skills. When you are freeze-dried, your skill level is truncated at a specific point in your career and has not been seasoned to the tactical, operational, and strategic environments that have continued to evolve. The risk to an operational reserve in this instance lies with the RC senior leaders who were trained in a strategic reserve and are now attempting to lead and retool an operational reserve.

A senior leader in the RC has to have a platform in which there is a refinement of leadership skills and formalized training. Core leader competencies are the requirement that each reserve component officer should possess. The Army's FM 6-22 dedicates an entire appendix to effectively define core leader competencies.³² This FM also defines leadership as influencing people by providing purpose, motivation, and direction while operating to accomplish the mission and improve the organization.³³ Leadership is further broken down into goals that are derived from the previous definition.³⁴ The three goals are listed as: 1) lead others, 2) develop the organization and its members, and 3) accomplish the mission. I believe that vision, communication and climate are firmly nested within these three goals.

Leading others requires a modest degree of influencing others. This influence requires that a vision be established to facilitate influence on members of the organization.³⁵ Clear and concise communication is then required of the leader to

transmit the vision in a way that ensures members of the organization are fully vested, on board, and able to express the vision in deeds and action with or without oversight in the absence of further guidance.³⁶ Finally, the fabric that intertwines the first goal within the definition of leadership and its elements of the leader's vision, and how it is communicated, is climate. The sphere of influence or climate that is within an organization is centered on trust.³⁷ This encompassing element provides the structural framework that enables a leader to guide an organization with the vision that has been communicated.

The second goal within the definition of leadership found in FM 6-22 is to develop the organization and its members. Again, the three core competencies of vision, communication and climate are nested within this portion of leadership. Vision, as a portion of this goal is aligned with the leader acknowledging responsibility for the organization followed by setting and maintaining realistic goals.³⁸ Communication in this portion of leadership is essential. This is where the leader provides and encourages open and candid viewpoints that may have a contrarian view of the status quo within the organization.³⁹ Communication within this goal also lets the organization know the difference between maintaining professional standards and a zero-defects mentality.⁴⁰ Again, the fabric that supports this goal of leadership is climate. In order for the AC and RC to embrace the same climate within the total force concept, it is incumbent upon each component's senior leaders to take the appropriate action that fosters individuals within the organization to work together while also displaying initiative. Healthy relationships that foster teamwork and build trust allow the leader in this area to involve

others in decisions while keeping them informed of the consequences of those actions.⁴¹

The last goal within the definition of leadership found in FM 6-22 is to accomplish the mission. The three core competencies of vision, communication and climate are also nested within this portion of leadership. Within this goal, vision is demonstrated as the leader seeks, recognizes, and takes advantage of opportunities to improve performance.⁴² Communication within this goal is imperative as the leader is getting results by providing guidance and receiving feedback through a healthy interaction with individuals of the organization, specifically between the RC and AC.⁴³ Climate within this goal is chronicled through the leader removing barriers that ultimately protect the organization from unnecessary tasks and distractions that may be internally or externally generated.⁴⁴

While FM 6-22 defines leadership with three specific goals, there is a requirement to elevate the essence of leadership as described within that field manual so that it has application within the strategic realm. It is also imperative that the connection of vision, communication, and climate be sewn into that definition and further realized and nested as core competencies of a strategic leader within the reserve component. In order to properly encapsulate the core competencies that a reserve component strategic leader must embrace, it is necessary to properly define the strategic leader within the context of the 'Be, Know, and Do' trilogy. Answering the following questions could define those strategic leader core competencies: "What does a strategic leader have to be?", "What does a strategic leader have to know?", and

“What does a strategic leader have to do?” General George Casey, the current Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, presented the following succinct definition:

Strategic leaders guide the achievement of their organizational vision within a larger enterprise by directing policy and strategy, building consensus, acquiring and allocating resources, influencing organizational culture, and shaping complex and ambiguous external environments. They lead by example to build effective organizations, grow the next generation of leaders, energize subordinates, seek opportunities to advance organizational goals, and balance personal and professional demands.⁴⁵

Vision is the cornerstone of the strategic leader’s foundation. Chance, fog, chaos, and friction are all terms that Carl von Clausewitz, a 19th century Prussian theorist, applied in developing his theory of war. The VUCA environment is what students at the Army War College hear repeatedly.⁴⁶ Descriptors of a VUCA environment and Clausewitz’s views on chance, fog, chaos, and friction both draw a distinct parallel that ignores time. The strategic leader description delivered by General Casey drives home an important point; the only constant is change and a vision that is scalable, adaptable, and feasible needs to navigate that change. One question that the total force of the Marine Corps has to answer is, “Can Marine Forces Reserve successfully navigate change from a strategic to operational reserve?” The strategic leaders within the AC and RC are in the process of developing a vision. The vision is mostly applicable to the active component as fiscal restraints become a reality throughout the Department of Defense (DOD).⁴⁷ The ability of a strategic leader to provide vision that takes the VUCA environment into consideration is the most important core component of strategic leadership and this is what our AC and RC leaders will have to grasp in order to make the operational reserve a reality.

Throughout the tactical, operational, and strategic levels of organizations, a strategic leader's vision will pierce each level. The medium in which this vision is conveyed is communication, while also having an organizational environment that is empowering, learning and allows open dialogue. John P. Kotter in his book, *Leading Change*, opens chapter 5, 'Developing a Vision and Strategy', with an analogy that codifies vision, communication, and climate expertly. In this analogy there are three groups of people eating lunch in a park. Someone in the first group stands up and tells the group to get up and follow me. That person begins to walk away and notices that only a few people within the group stood up. He stops and addresses the remainder of individuals who did not move and harshly tells them to get up and move now. In the second group someone stands and says, "We're going to have to move. Here is the plan; each of us stands and moves in the direction of the apple tree; stay at least two feet away from the other groups; do not run; do not leave any personal belongings on the ground; do not stop at the base of the tree; and when we all get there . . ."48 In the third group someone alerts the others; "It is going to rain in a few minutes, why don't we go over to the apple tree, sit, stay dry, and even have apples for lunch."49

Although the example most assuredly did not occur in VUCA environment, strong parallels for the core components of strategic leadership ring loud and clear. In the first group, authoritarian methods of follow me and do what I say because I said so, are empty and hollow at the strategic level.⁵⁰ No vision was communicated and it seemed unlikely that anyone from the group would be accepted or allowed to do anything except get up and follow the designated group lead. The second group leader did communicate a vision, however, at the strategic level that type of climate is truly toxic,

not empowering, and open dialogue was not welcomed. The third group leader is an ideal example of a strategic leader that uses the core components of vision, communication and climate to provide far reaching direction in a changing environment; uses effective communication to inform the group; and fostered a climate that welcomed change. Each group member trusted the direction that they were moving in, and felt that input would be welcomed if required.

Synthesizing Kotter's analogy to the reserve component highlights some additional risk of an operational reserve. The tactical level requires a modest degree of authoritarian leadership. Senior officers within the reserve component may display these characteristics due to compressed timelines, young staffs and inexperienced Staff Non-Commissioned Officers. Kotter's second example displays a tendency that occurs at the operational level of leadership, micromanagement. Over eager staffs, disparate locations, and unity of purpose without unity of effort is the potential downfall. As the reserve component delves deeper in the operational efforts of the total force Marine Corps and greater portions of the RC are engaged within a security cooperation MAGTF or a special purpose MAGTF, oversight on the coordination, details, and resource management may be beyond the capacity of the reserve component leadership and the active component will have to take a more definitive role to ensure that the Marines are properly prepared for deployment, engagement, or combat.

Every strategic leader has to be aware of the core concepts that form the basis of strategic leadership; vision, communication and climate. This concept is conjoined with the, "Be, Know, and Do" trilogy; the definition of leadership; and General Casey's definition of a strategic leader. The message that is eloquently nested in Kotter's third

leadership analogy provides a view that reserve component strategic leaders need to become familiar with in order to mitigate the risk of a Marine Corps operational reserve. Vision, communication, and climate are the most important core competencies that the total force must ensure of the strategic leaders within the RC. When a clear path of accomplishing the above leadership components is objectively completed by reserve component strategic leaders, they will be able to make decisions and effectively align Marine Forces Reserve within the rapidly changing environment that all of the services operate in today.

Risk and Reward

The RC and AC have a unity of purpose within the construct of the Total Force Marine Corps. In the definition of the problem, the Marine Corps has to consider that the most efficient solution in an integrated, scalable, and competent operational reserve is beyond the organizational capacity of the current 60 year old Marine Forces Reserve structure. The Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Amos, detailed the below as a description of the Total Force Marine Corps:

Scalable and Task organized; at the front door of conflict and crisis, we possess the finesse the training and the tools to knock at the door diplomatically, pick the lock skillfully or kick it in violently.⁵¹

Figure 2 defines the sweet spot for the Marine Corps' missions and how we seek to tailor and design our force. An operational reserve component reduces risk for the total force through augmentation throughout the spectrum of the Corps' assigned roles and missions.



Capabilities-Based Review



Figure 2. FORCE STRUCTURE REVIEW Group Overview

The reward of an operational Marine Corps reserve component gives the institution a majority ownership of a niche of warfare that the Army finds too costly and the other services are not manned and equipped to handle. Readiness is a stronghold that the Marine Corps holds dearly. Application of readiness to personnel and equipment requires a doctrine and organizational structure that can be tailored to any conflict at any time, and anywhere. Having a reserve component that is sound in all manner of warfare and can operate independent of a pronounced active component presence at the start of planning through execution is optimal for the total force Marine Corps. A few of the risks in having an operational Marine Corps reserve component within the total force structure can be mitigated by placing increased standards for promotion and billet assignments on the reserve component as is done for the active component.

A monitor does not exist in the reserves to assist in managing the billet requirements that a reserve component officer fills. A reserve component officer manages his career through networking and applying to active component advertisements for billet requirements. In essence there is no quality control of reserve component personnel to fill billets whether tactical, operational, or strategic. If there is no suitable reserve component Marine to fill the requirement, then an active component Marine has to take that responsibility or gap the billet. To continue promoting mediocrity and placing freeze-dried lieutenants in the role of strategic leaders will further hamper the operational reserve concept that the Corps seeks to have success in and also eliminate the two Marine Corps that exist. Organizational transformation in restructuring its existing Cold War strategic reserve component into a streamlined operational reserve component will provide a partial reward sought from a flexible and lethal force that is integrated, scalable, and competent.

There is the risk of too many requirements that can be levied on the individual Marine. RC Marines are faced with additional challenges that AC Marines don't need to consider. The time requirement for training, deployment, combat, family readiness and civilian employment are competing interests that weigh heavily on the decision of a reserve component Marine to continue meeting an operational reserve demand requirement. There is an optimal balance for the enterprise and the individual reserve Marine and that balance has to be met in order to realize the reward of an operational reserve. The balance is between a RC force used to augment and supplement the AC throughout the year, regardless of conflict or duration; RC forces that are used for theater security cooperation, exercise support and enhancement, and rotational

deployments akin to the unit deployment program (UDP); and RC forces used for scheduled commitments through crisis response in support of America's National and Military Security Strategies.

The risks of an operational reserve can be overcome with policy and legislative changes in how we use the reserve component, policy and legislative changes in how we account for reserve component pay and participation, and most importantly, policy and legislative changes that provide comprehensive protection of the reserve component Marine's civilian employment. The AC and RC form the air, ground, and logistics enterprise that is total force of the Marine Corps. The global war on terror produced a reserve component that is seasoned and created a symbiotic relationship of the total force that will guide the enterprise well within the 21st century. The reward of an operational reserve can be realized by the Marine Corps through developing a laser like focus on the aforementioned policy recommendations to further expand upon the synergy that exists in today's expeditionary force in readiness.

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